

New Media Has Dramatically Changed Communications with the Public: The LASD Perspective

By Mike Parker



At great risk, another great arrest was made as officers took the heavily armed robber into custody without the use of force. Law enforcement tried to get the news media interested, but even with our best efforts, the story was never shared with the public.

That was just a few years ago.

Like other progressive leaders, Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca saw that harnessing new eCommunications technology makes it possible for the public to hear of the excellence of our personnel directly from the LASD, instead of hoping for the best from what is often a disinterested mainstream news media.

To accomplish this, a strategy was employed and powerful combinations of new eCommunications systems were implemented. Since 2010, these efforts have expanded to direct the right message to the right audience with internationally recognized results. This includes the fact we are building trust and confidence in the public, because they can now hear a message that we care, try hard and succeed.

The new Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department eCommunications systems include an innovative new website, Nixle text and email messaging, interactive Social Media, confidential public messaging and more. While still evolving, news releases are now delivered directly to the public (and news media) in the most popular ways they want to receive them.

As the second largest policing agency in the nation, the LASD's diverse jurisdiction demands additional efforts to truly give the public what they want; hyper-local, geo-specific and topic-specific information. This is why each of the patrol stations has their own

geo-specific Nixle text and email feeds, and new local station-specific websites are being implemented. Localized social media (Twitter and Facebook) will soon follow.

By utilizing the LASD marketing plan, which defines our strategies and identifies our target markets for our timely, quantity and quality messaging, the following communication strategies have been deployed and can be found on www.lasd.org.

www.lasd.org

Designed by the LASD in consultation with marketing experts, lasd.org was modeled after news media websites. The target market is the public as we cover the LASD as a news story. The public and news media have responded well with lasd.org receiving more than 500,000 page views monthly from the L.A. area and from over 100 countries. With translation into over 50 languages available, some of its features include:

The Home page posts LASD news releases on the regularly updated center column. Photos and videos greet you at logon. The left and right columns are consistent links for the returning public. The upper left has search engines and the most popular links. The upper right has secondary homepages to other target markets, such as the Justice Community and LASD Family. The *Newsroom* page includes all LASD news releases. The *Crime Information and Prevention* page includes detailed crime statistics and mapping, wanted and missing persons, and crime prevention resources.

Instant Messaging and Social Media

New eCommunication technologies allow us to send messages directly to the public and

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FREE
TO PUBLIC SAFETY

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Communicate with residents by SMS and email at no cost

In times of crisis, it's imperative that your residents stay instantly informed.

Nixle Connect is the most robust, effective and easy-to-use public notification system available – and it's available to your agency at no cost.

“With the Nixle instant notification system, the Sheriff's Department can communicate accurate, timely, and reliable information directly to the public via your cell phones and email. Nixle is a great success story of a public-private partnership that enhances public safety at no cost to taxpayers.”

— Los Angeles County Sheriff, **Lee Baca**

To learn more about Nixle Connect and other Nixle products, or to enroll your agency, visit:

www.nixle.com



THE LASD PERSPECTIVE

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the news media. Now, whether our story is covered or not by mainstream news, we know our message will reach thousands of people.

Nixle (free) instant messaging

With more than 30,000 Nixle subscribers, the LASD has the most Nixle subscribers of any one police agency in the nation. Nixle.com short codes have proven how much the public wants timely and quality topic-specific information via text: 5,000 new subscribers joined during the two-day Crown Fire in July 2010.

Twitter @LASD_News

This is auto-populated via Nixle and has thousands of followers, including all major news media outlets and the public. Re-tweeting news stories via PIO's Twitter feeds has been particularly effective in amplifying our messages.



Facebook

LASD's fan page has thousands of "friends" and grows daily. There are few problematic postings from the public and more than 75 percent of the feedback comments are positive or appreciative. Visit www.facebook.com/LosAngeles-CountySheriffsDepartment.

facebook

YouTube

The LASD main newsroom channel continues to expand its video library of LASD-created videos and links to news videos about the LASD. Visit www.youtube.com/LACountySheriff.



November 8-9, 2011

TRADESHOW AND TRAINING

Ontario Convention Center, Ontario, California



For FAST and EASY registration

REGISTER ONLINE at:

COPSWEST.com

produced by the



— ADDITIONAL EVENTS —

November 7, 2011

LEADERSHIP TRAINING DAY

Ontario DoubleTree Hotel

November 10, 2011

**ANNUAL LA COUNTY SHERIFF'S
POLICE VEHICLE TEST DAY**

CSAA Auto Club Speedway
Fontana, California

RESOURCES

Sharing successful strategies and technologies with each other helps us all to adapt to the endless changes in new media.

IACP Center for Social Media Directory

<http://www.iacpsocialmedia.org/>

Social Media – Interactive Training Video

(now completing production)
P.O.S.T. video library
The Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training—California
<http://post.ca.gov/>

Internet, Instant Communications, Social Media, Marketing and the LASD

More than 40 links to articles and resources, and the LASD marketing plan
www.Marketing.lasd.org

PRESENTATIONS

COPSWEST — California Peace Officers Association (CPOA)

Nov. 8 to 9, 2011
Ontario, San Bernardino County, California

Social Media — Benefits, Your Cybersecurity & Criminal Investigations

Nov. 8
1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
<http://www.cpoa.org/>

New: CPOA Social Media training classes

www.cpoa.org
Dates and locations coming soon

A. Introduction to Social Media, eCommunication and the Internet (lecture, 8 hours)

B. Hands-on Introduction (lab, 8 hour): Social Media, eCommunications and News Media Relations
[Day A is a pre-requisite to attend Day B]

Messaging Through Partnerships LACrimeStoppers

Over 40 policing agencies in LA County have partnered to create the successful Los Angeles Regional Crime Stoppers program. The anonymous phone, web and text tips system have resulted in at least 200 arrests and the recovery of over \$1.2 million in property and drugs in 2010, and is one of the largest programs in the nation. Check out www.lacrimestoppers.com.



SNAP –Specific Needs Disaster Voluntary Registry

This is for persons in LA County who may need specific disability-related assistance and/or accommodations during major disasters. These may include communicating through alternative means, requiring specialized para-transit services, life-sustaining medications or equipment, etc. It is a project of the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) in cooperation with other cities and agencies in the LA County disaster response operational area. Visit <http://snap.lacounty.gov>.



Alert LACounty

This is an emergency mass notification system to contact LA County residents and businesses via recorded phone messages, text messages and email during emergencies. An emergency message is created and sent to designated phone numbers in the affected area. It is available for use by all police agencies in LA County. Cell phones and voice over IP phones need to be registered, but millions of traditional “land line” phones are already in the system. Check out <http://alert.lacounty.gov>. ☘



Captain Mike Parker is the Unit Commander of Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau (SHB), Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. SHB leads the media, marketing and communications efforts of the LASD, internally and externally. Contact Twitter@mpLASD, SHBNewsroom@lasd.org and (323) 267-4800.

